editor's choice

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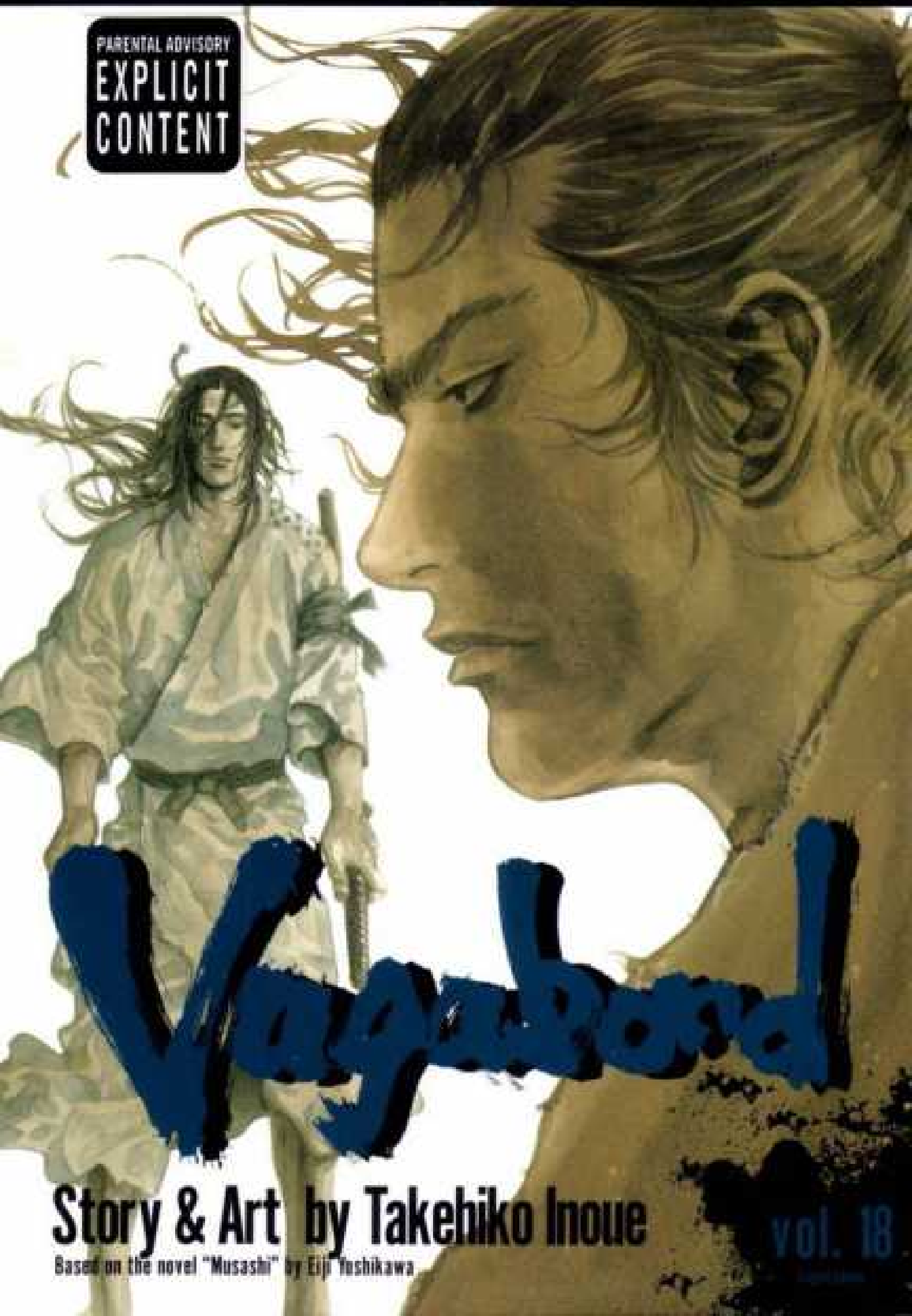

Vagabond

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 18

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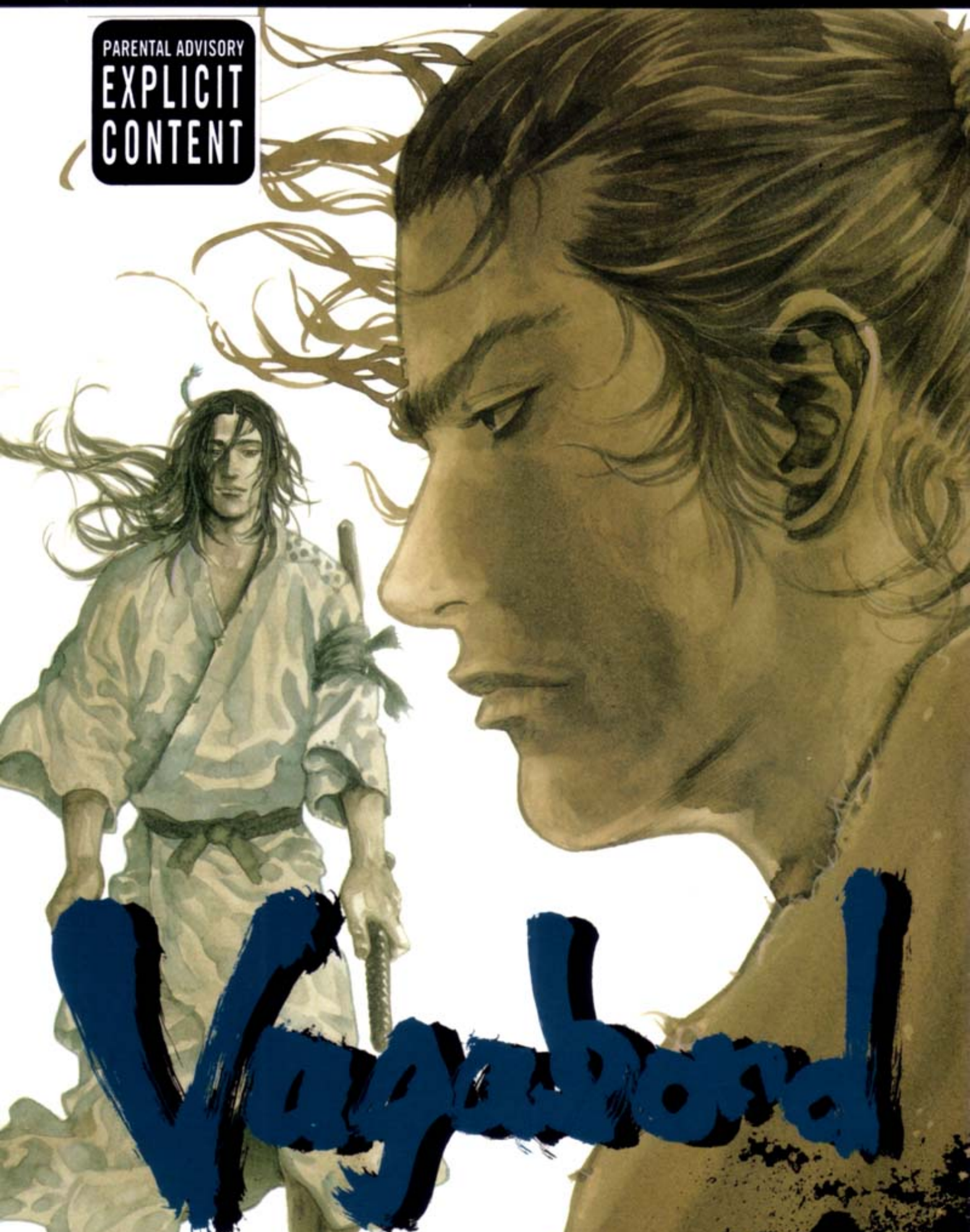

Vagabond

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

vol. 18

English Edition

Vagabond Vol. 18

Story & Art by
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Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

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PARENTAL ADVISORY
VAGABOND is rated M for Mature.
Contains graphic violence and sexual content. Recommended for mature readers.

INVINCIBLE SWORDSMAN UNDER THE HEAVENS GANRYŪ SASAKI KOJIRO
NUMBER ONE MARTIAL ARTIST UNDER THE HEAVENS MUSO GONNOSUKE

Vagabond

vol. 18

Story & Art by Takehiko Inoue

Based on the novel "Musashi" by Eiji Yoshikawa

#158 | Musō Gonnosuke

...GANRYŪ...
...SASAKI KOJIRŌ.
INVINCI-BLE...
...SWORDS-MAN...
...THE...
...UNDER...
...HEAVENS...
日下開山
SASAKI KOJIRŌ?!

PAINT ON YOUR FACE?
HMM ...?!
HMM. WHAT'S THIS...?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
WELL, OLD MAN?!
WHAT'S THAT BANNER ?!
IT'S RIDICU-LOUS.
URK

SASAKI, MASTER OF THE GANRYŪ STYLE?
NEVER HEARD OF IT!!
ANYONE ELSE HEARD OF IT?!

HEH HEH HEH...
.....
HOW EMBARRASSING !!
INVINCIBLE ?!
SHOW SOME HUMILITY!!

YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO PROMOTE YOURSELF TO GET HIRED FOR A POST.
WHEREAS FOR ME...
YOUR BACK SAYS THE SAME THING.
I'M DIFFER-ENT!!
...

THIS IS A WAY OF LIFE.
兵法天下一
夢想権之助

兵法天下一
AHH...
HUH?

WHAT WAS THAT, PAGEBOY?!
HM?
HEY, PAGE-BOY!
STOP LOOKING SO DIM! BE A MAN!
I DON'T LIKE HOW YOU MAKE YOUR PAGE HOLD YOUR BANNER.
BE A MAN AND WEAR IT ON YOUR OWN BACK!!
DIM

HM?
NO, YOU SEE... HE'S--
YOU MUST HAVE A WIFE AND KIDS.
HOW OLD ARE YOU?
I'M FIFTY-TWO... I THINK.
FORGET ABOUT IT!
YOU WON'T GET RECRUITED BRANDISHING THAT BANNER AT YOUR AGE!
YOU'RE PAST YOUR PRIME!!
HOW CAN YOU CLAIM TO BE INVINCIBLE?!
LOOK, OLD MAN, IF ALL MANNER OF RABBLE CLAIM TO BE INVINCIBLE...

FSH
IT MAKES ME LOOK BAD!!
HMM?
SO GIVE UP YOUR DELUSIONS AND GO BACK TO FARMING!!
GET OUT OF HERE!!
GRR...

ARGH?!
THUNK
FIP

!
TONK

YOUR SCORE-- ZERO!!

MUTTER MUTTER
WOW ...

AHH

BESIDES, I'M NOT KOJIRŌ.

AHH...

LET'S HAVE A REST, KOJIRŌ. I'M TIRED!!
PHEW
AUHH...
AHH...

OTHERWISE YOU'LL GET BORED.
I KNOW...
YOU'RE SEEING THE WORLD FOR THE FIRST TIME. IT MUST BE EXCITING.
EVERYTHING MUST BE NEW TO YOU.
BUT DON'T RUSH IT.
KREEN
KREEN
KREEN
BZZZ
BZZZ
BZZZ
HEY!

THERE YOU ARE!
HUF HUF
FICH
TUNK
TUNK

I ACCEPT THAT DEFEAT!!
BUT I, MUSŌ GONNOSUKE ...
FSH
I SEEK ANOTHER MATCH WITH YOU...
SASAKI KOJIRŌ, MASTER OF THE GANRYŪ STYLE!!
FICH
...CANNOT WALK AWAY FROM THAT SURPRISE ATTACK WITHOUT REDEEMING MY REPUTATION AS CHAMPION!!

IF YOU DEFEAT HIM I'LL CONSIDER TAKING YOU ON.
TAP
FIGHT *HIM*.
IT'S TOO HOT TO FIGHT.
AND I ONLY JUST COOLED DOWN.

HE'S GANRYŪ...
...SASAKI KOJIRŌ.
AND YOU STILL DON'T UNDER-STAND, DO YOU?
SO HE IS BRANDISHING HIS REPUTAION OF INVINCIBILITY...
...WITH HIS OWN HANDS.
FICH

FWP
YOU LOOK EAGER TO TAKE ME ON!!
HE MAY BE BIG, BUT HE'S STILL JUST A CHILD.
A CHILD... HE HAS A CHILD'S FACE.

TUGG
YAH!!
THWAK

THUNK
YAH!!
KRRICH
.....

FWOOSH
YAHH!

山門下

WAIT!
IS THAT IT?!
WHY AREN'T YOU FIGHTING ME?

WAIT!!

巌流佐々木小次郎

APPARENTLY, YOU'RE NOT READY FOR THE STAGE YET.

THAT BRIEF MATCH...

THOSE EYES...

...WAS ENOUGH TO MAKE HIM LOSE INTEREST IN ME.

THE STAGE?

WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?

GANRYŪ SASAKI KOJIRŌ...

DAMN IT...!

Vagabond

(BUT HE'S STILL GOING TO WEAR IT.)
(HMPH... YOU GOT A PROBLEM WITH THAT!?)

I'M HUNGRY.
AHH...
AUU...

#159 | The Stage

HEY! WAIT!!
SASAKI KOJIRŌ!
AND, UH--

HEY, OLD BEARD. WAIT!!
HM?

I FORGOT TO ASK HIM HIS NAME.
HUF HUF

THE NAME'S ITŌ ITTŌSAI!!

日下開山
TUNK
GASP!
ITŌ...
FWP
FWOOP
.....
HUF HUF
...ITTŌSAI!!

I CAN'T BELIEVE IT.
THE GOD OF SWORD-FIGHTING, ITŌ ITTŌSAI!!
SO YOU'RE STILL ALIVE?!

SENSEI!!
WAIT, SENSEI!
LET ME JOIN YOU!

I'VE WANTED TO DEVELOP MY STYLE THE WAY YOU CREATED YOUR ITTŌ STYLE.
I LEFT MY VILLAGE TO BECOME A FAMOUS SWORDSMAN!
I NEVER EXPECTED IN MY WILDEST DREAMS I'D GET TO MEET THE LEGENDARY MASTER ITŌ ITTŌSAI...

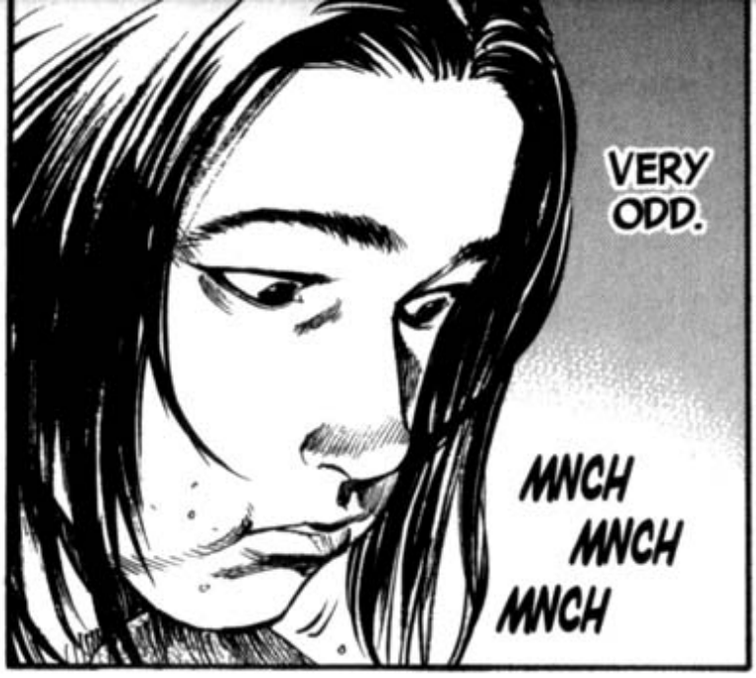
無双剣
木小沢郎

御休泊

HMM... WHERE SHALL WE GO, KOJIRŌ?

SENSEI, WHERE ARE YOU HEADED?
EH?

MNCH MNCH MNCH
MNCH MNCH


VERY ODD.
MNCH MNCH MNCH

HE'S AN ODD ONE. DOESN'T PAY ATTENTION TO ANYONE.
GANRYŪ SASAKI KOJIRŌ ...

WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THE "STAGE?"
SENSEI...

.....

I DON'T REALLY UNDERSTAND.
I'M NOT READY FOR THE STAGE YET.

AFTER I FOUGHT KOJIRŌ, YOU SAID...

INVINCI-
BLE...
...SWORDS-
MAN
UNDER THE
HEAVENS.
.....

THEN YOU
REFUSED TO
SWING YOUR
PRACTICE
SWORD AT
ME!
WHY?!
YOU
COM-
PLETELY
BEAT
ME!

SAY
SOME-
THING,
DAMN
IT!!

KOJIRŌ, WHAT
DOES IT MEAN
TO BE READY
FOR THE
STAGE?!
WHAT
AM I
NOT
PREPARED
FOR?!

Uuu

TMP

MNCH
MNCH

HM?
IS SASAKI KOJIRŌ HERE?

GANRYŪ ...
MNCH MNCH

KOJIRŌ! HE'S ASKING ABOUT YOU.
...SASAKI KOJIRŌ... IS HE HERE?
THAT BANNER CAUGHT MY EYE.
TO BE INVINCIBLE IS A BOLD CLAIM.

ODDLY ENOUGH, I BEAT THEM BOTH.
...WHO MADE THE VERY SAME CLAIM.
AND IN FACT, I HAVE FOUGHT TWO SWORDS-MEN...

AND IF IT HAPPENS A THIRD TIME THEN I'LL KNOW FOR SURE...

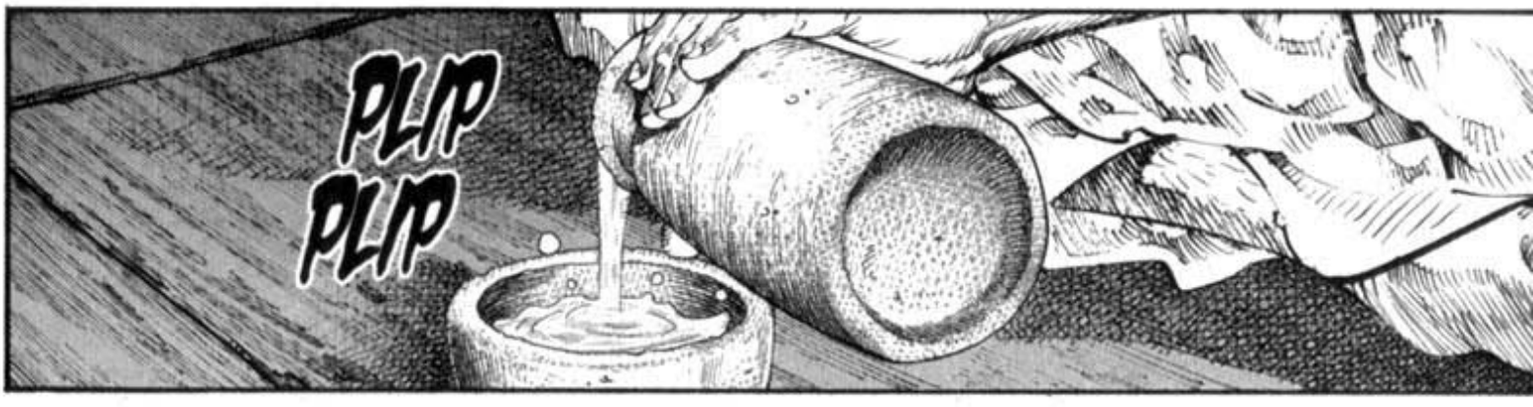
MNCH MNCH

AFTER MY FIRST WIN I THOUGHT MYSELF BLESSED.
BUT THEN I WON A SECOND...

THIS IS NO BLESSING...

IT IS BECAUSE I AM IN FACT THE INVINCIBLE ONE.
SLURP
SLURP
BURP

I REQUEST A MATCH WITH YOU.
SASAKI KOJIRŌ!!
TIK TIK

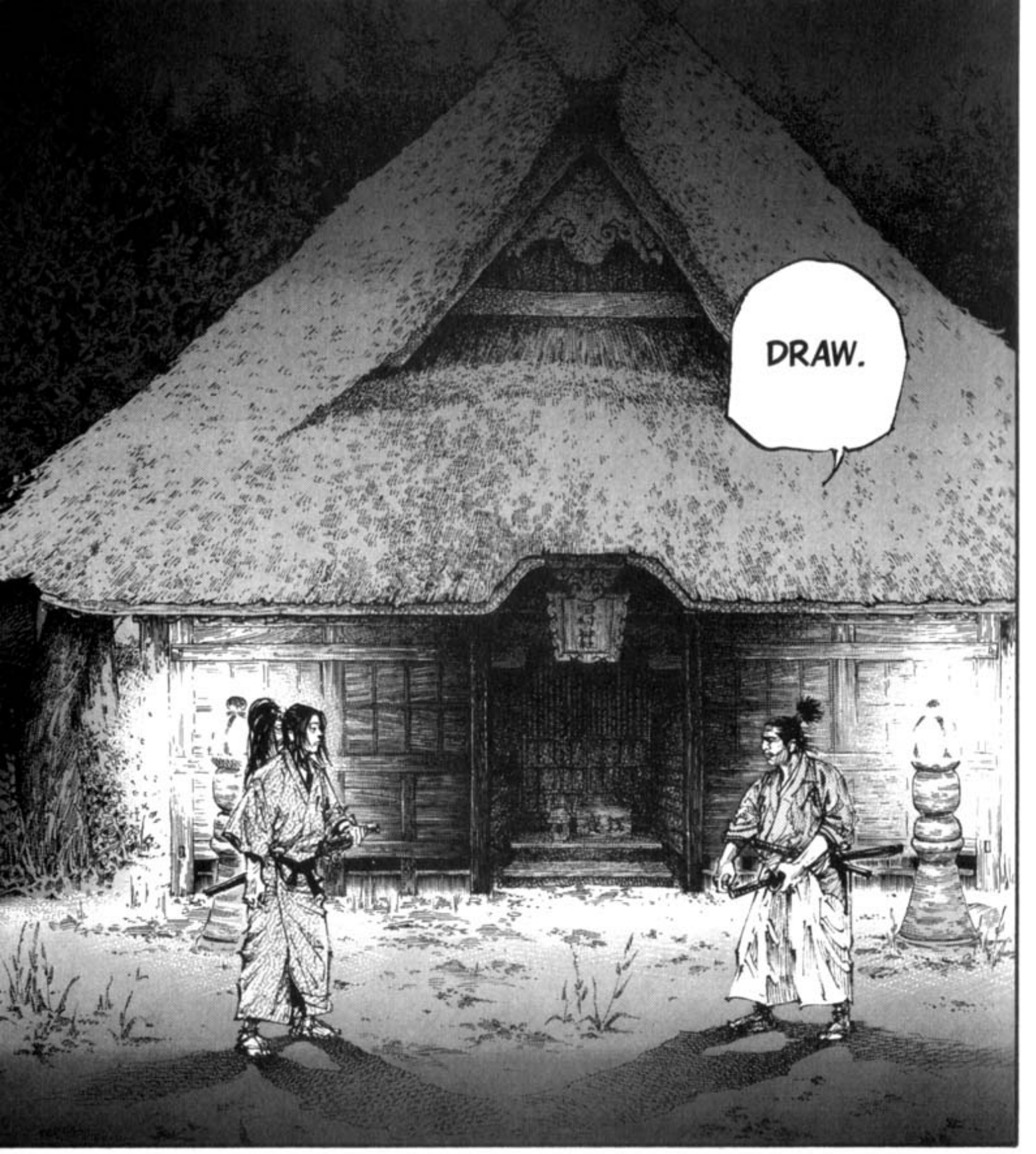

PLIP PLIP

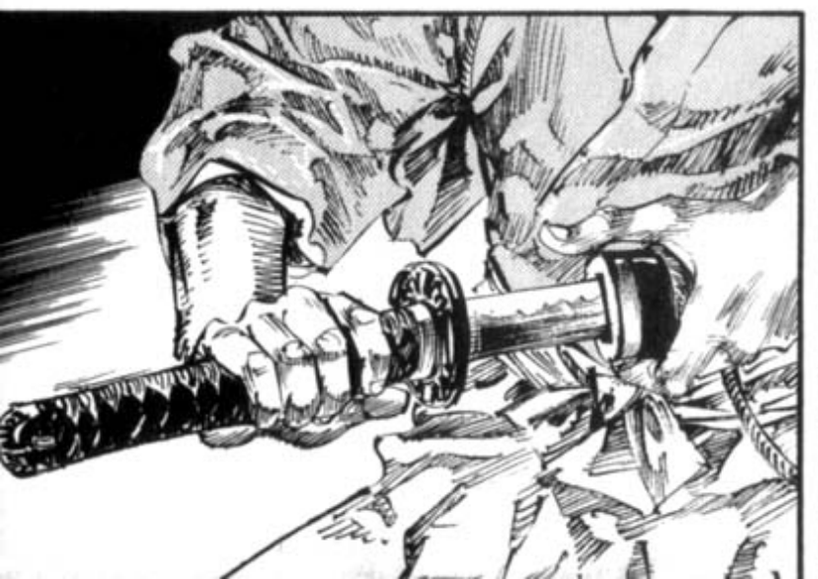
I HAVE NO OBJEC-TIONS TO THAT.

WITH REAL SWORDS ?

SMIRK
FWIP
TUP

GRB
...!!
山門下口

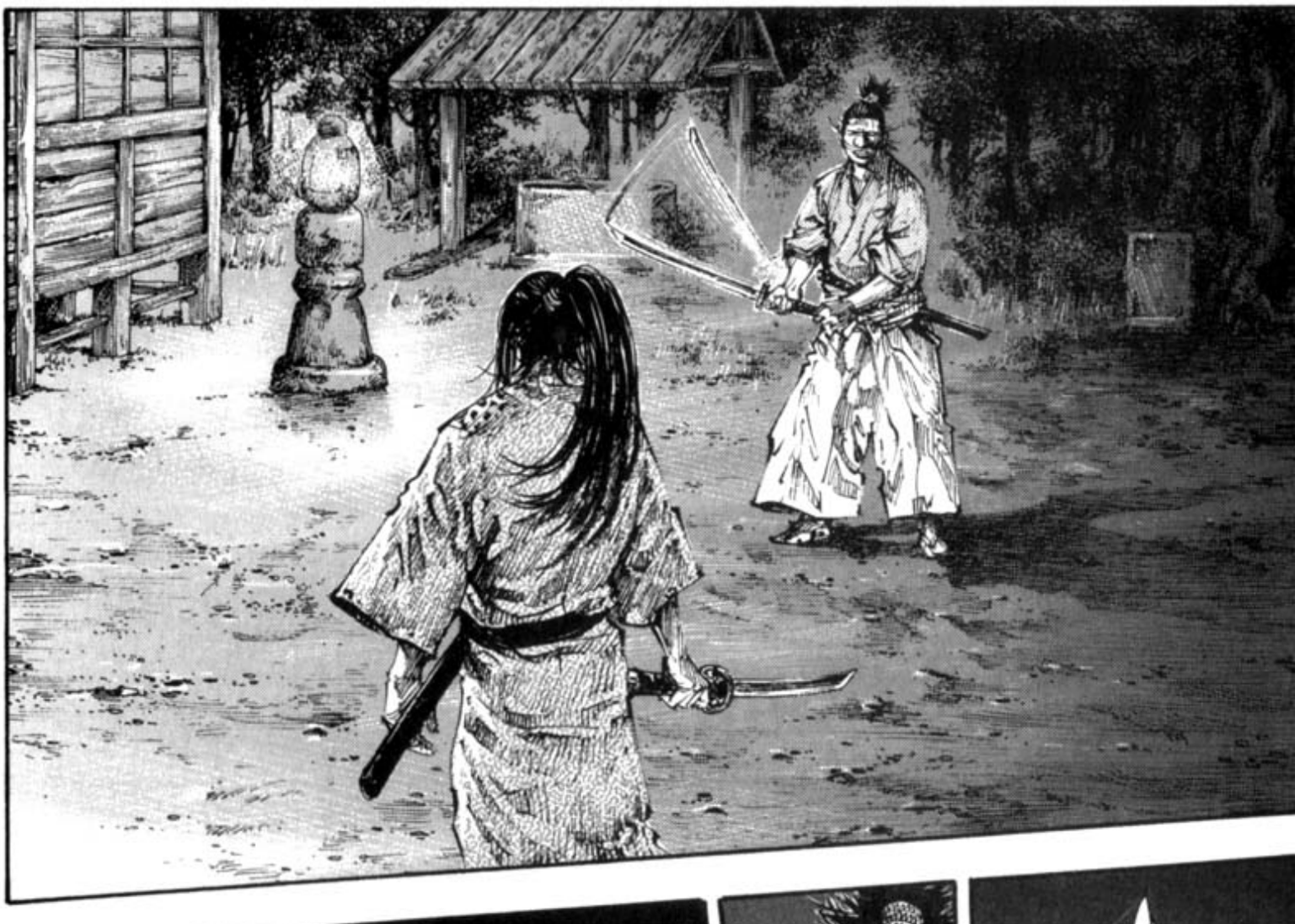

DRAW.

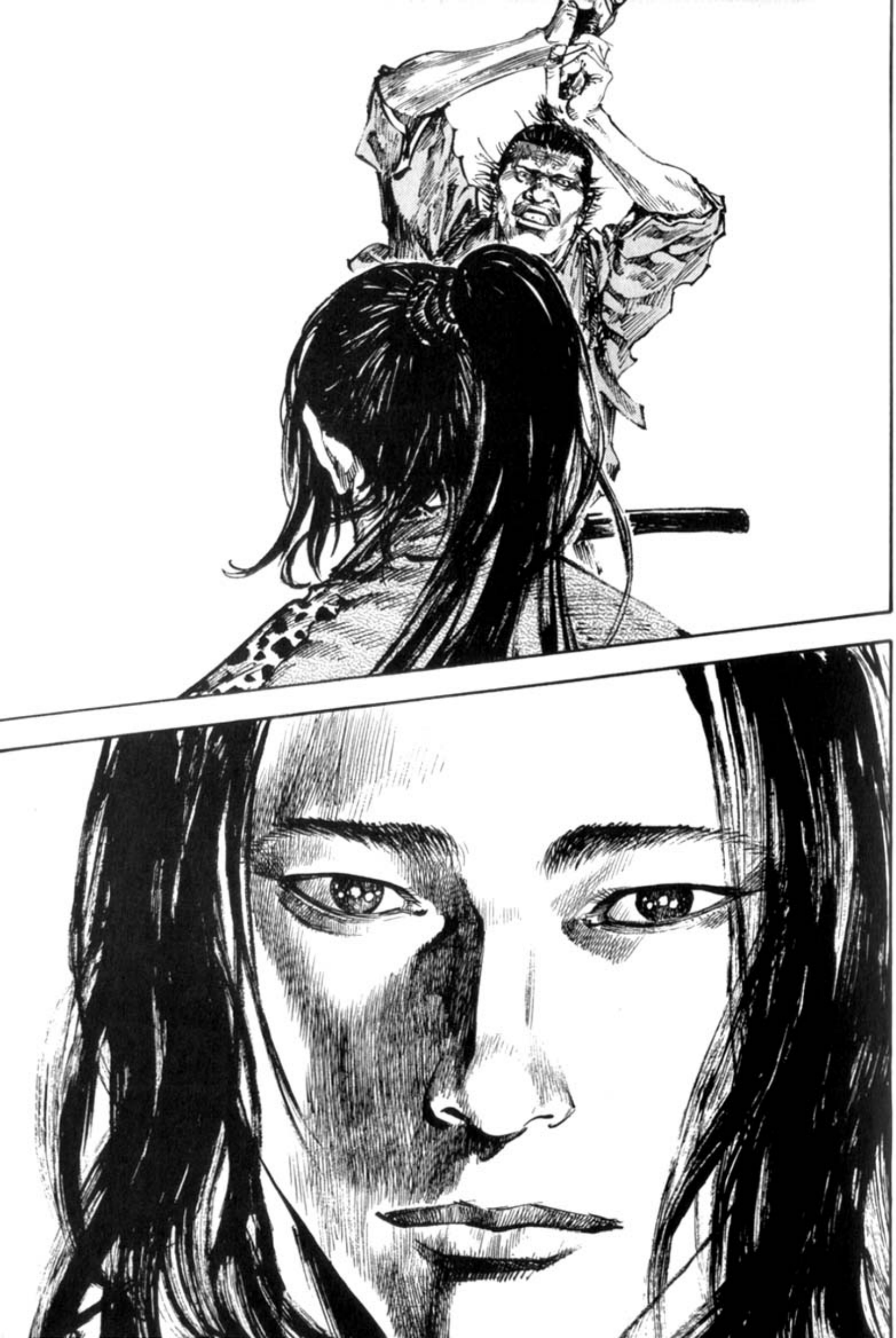


THEN I'LL GO FIRST.

AWOO
ARR
ARR

AWOO
ARR

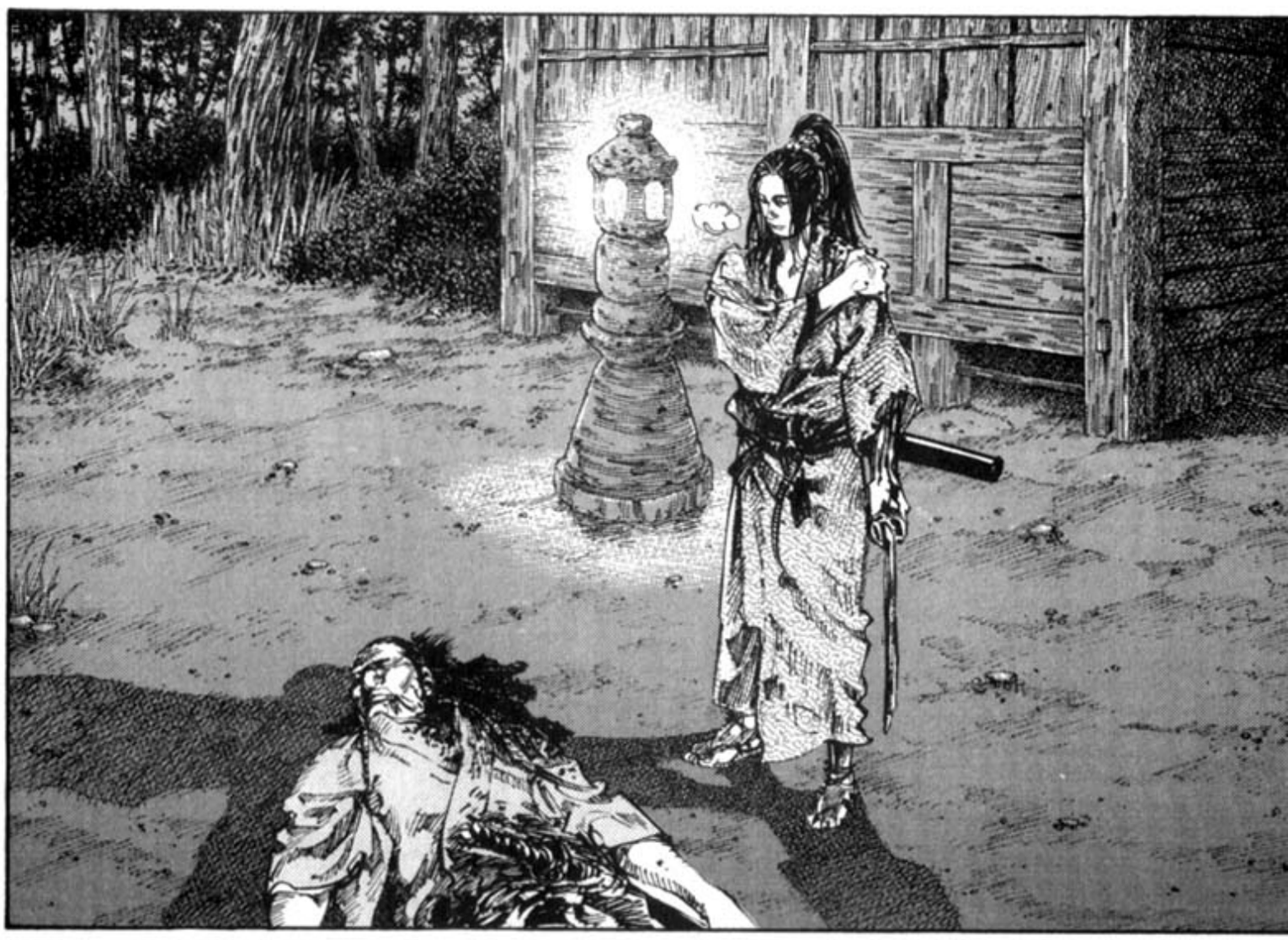




!
PLIP
PLIP

...TO TEST THEIR SKILL AND SPIRIT.
AFTER YEARS OF DISCIPLINED TRAINING...
...SWORDSMEN SEEK OUT MATCHES...
KOJIRŌ WILL CUT SUCH MEN DOWN.
DEATH!
THEY'RE PREPARED TO MEET THEIR END IN THIS PURSUIT.
KOJIRŌ CAN'T HEAR A THING.
AND HE CAN'T SPEAK A SINGLE WORD...
HUH?

AND YOU JUST AREN'T READY TO ENTER SUCH A FRAY.
...BUT FOR SOME REASON HE'S DRAWN IN TO SUCH FIGHTS.



WAS I...
.....

WAS I STRONG?
IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE TELLING ME?

I
LIVED
A
GOOD
LIFE.

Vagabond

(FWIP...)
.....

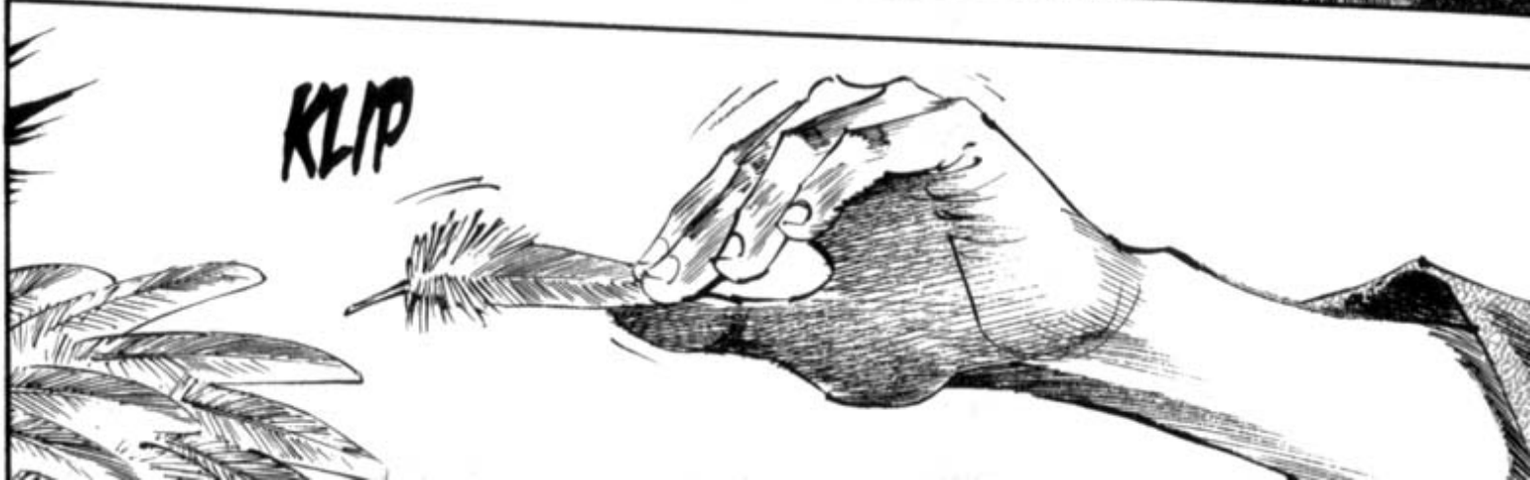
#160 | Battlefield

HEH HEH...
"NUMBER ONE UNDER THE HEAVENS" AND "INVINCIBLE UNDER THE HEAVENS" WALKING SIDE BY SIDE!
FICH
IF THEY REALLY THOUGHT THEY WERE INVINCIBLE, THEY'D FIGHT EACH OTHER!
HA HAH!
YOU GOT THAT RIGHT.

FICH
FICH

FICH
ANY MOMENT NOW...
BESIDES, NO CHAMPION SWORDSMEN WOULD BE HERE.
FICH

...A GREAT BATTLE IS ABOUT TO BEGIN.


KLIP

STOP THAT!!

WHAT ARE YOU SO HAPPY ABOUT?
YOU'RE SO ODD!
AHH...

YOU LOOK SO CAREFREE AND YET...

SLASH

WHY CUT DOWN AN OPPONENT WHO ISN'T PUTTING HIS ENTIRE LIFE BEHIND HIS SWORD?
YOU SEE...
THERE'S NO POINT IN CUTTING YOU DOWN.

FSH
BUT I CAN...
HUF
HUF
HUF
...?!
SO YOU...
...YOU'RE WILLING TO RISK YOUR LIFE, KOJIRŌ?
.....

BUT HE'S STILL LIVING BY THE SWORD.
HE'S DEDI-CATED.
"KOJIRO CAN'T HEAR A THING."
HE'S WILLING TO DIE...
MORE SO THAN I AM...
AIEE
AHH AHH
!
...?
AHH ...
HM?

SIR...
GASP!
FWP
FWP
FWP
FWP
FWP
FWP
FWP
...THAT'S ENOUGH...

SEN-SEI...
AIEEE

ARE YOU BUYING A WOMAN, TOO?!
KOJIRŌ ?!
TP
TP
THAT'S NOT FAIR!!
HE'S SO LUCKY.
GRB

HUF
HUF
WHERE'D YOU GO?!
KOJIRŌ, I WANT TO GO TOO...

HUF
HUF

FWISH
FWP

TRAINING!

...?!

FWOOSH

HE'S SO DEXTEROUS ...!!

...
OF COURSE!
HE'S ONLY HUMAN.
WE'RE NOT THAT DIFFER-ENT...

SPLISSH
HUH?!

AMAZING HOW HE DOESN'T SLIP OFF OF THAT UNSTABLE ROCK!
I'D HAVE FALLEN INTO THE RIVER!!

PLISSH
AHH!
.....
A TENGU GOBLIN?!

AHH!
AHHH!!

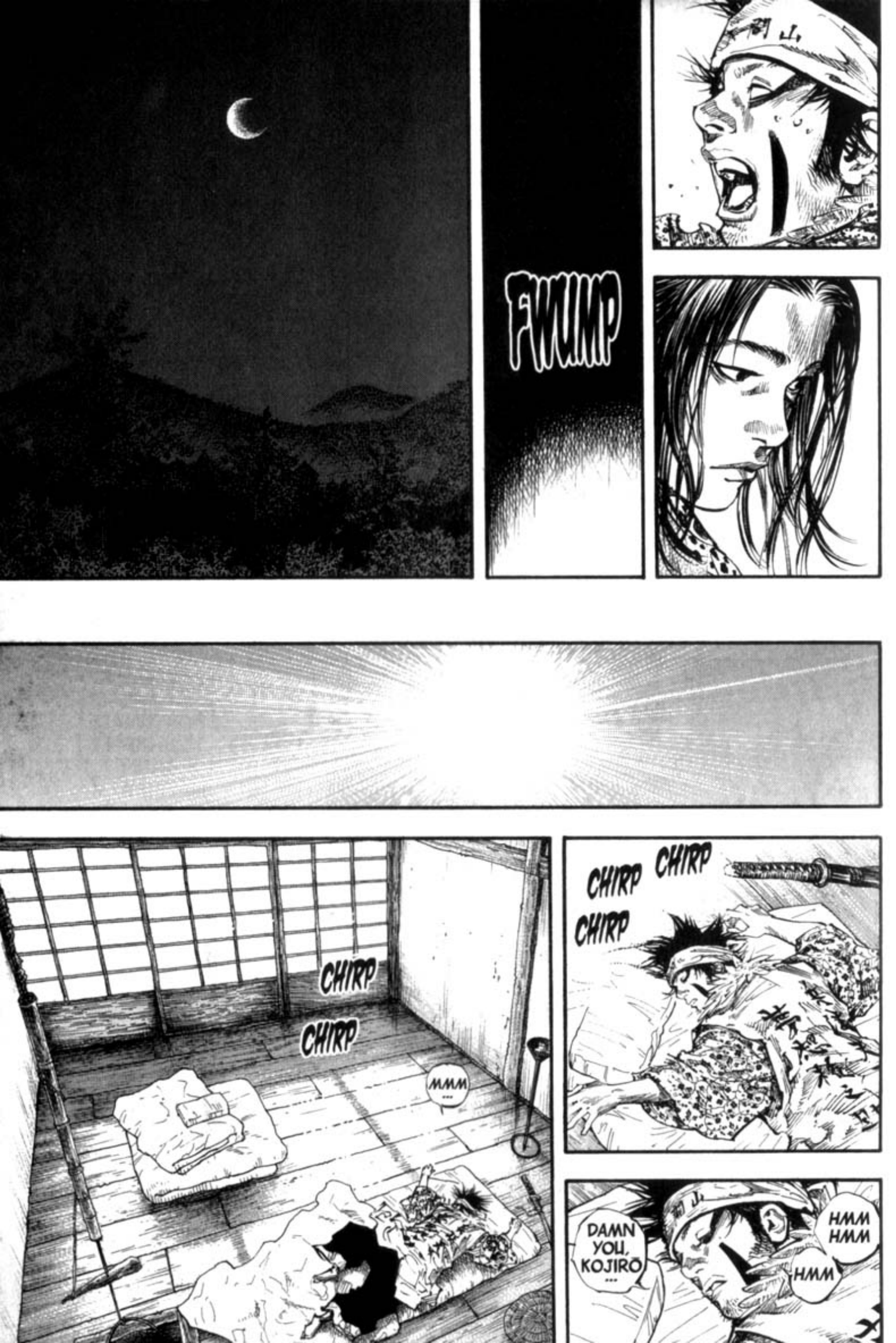
.....
FWISH
FWOOSH
RUB
RUB
I'LL LEARN...
I'LL LEARN FROM KOJIRŌ.
I'LL BECOME MUCH STRONGER.
YOU'LL SEE, KOJIRŌ!!
I MAY NOT BE READY YET...
...BUT I WILL BE!

HUF
HUF
SPLISSH
UHH...
HUF
HUF
PLOP
PLIP
PLIP
...THEN MUSŌ GONNOSUKE IS AT YOUR SERVICE.
IF YOU NEED A SPARRING PARTNER...

PLOP
PLIP
PLOP
PLIP
...SO YOU'LL BE HELPLESS IF I ATTACK YOU FROM BEHIND!
YOU'RE DEAF...
DAMN IT.
SO I'M NOT WORTH YOUR TIME, HUH...?
...
SWIP
TAKE THIS.
THIS IS WHAT YOU GET FOR MAKING ME ANGRY!!
KOJIRŌ !!

HUH
?

UMF!
WHUD
ARGH!


FWUMP
CHIRP
CHIRP
MMM...
CHIRP
CHIRP
CHIRP
DAMN YOU, KOJIRO...
HMM
HMM
HMM

DID YOU SEE MY SENSEI AND KOJIRŌ?!

TMP
TMP
TMP

!!
HM? I THOUGHT YOU LEFT WITH THEM.
THEY DEPARTED ABOUT AN HOUR AGO.

HM?
WHERE ARE YOU HEADED ?

SEKIGA-HARA! WHY?!
THEY'RE OFF TO SEKIGA-HARA.
YOU WERE FORTUNATE YOU DIDN'T JOIN THEM.

SMIRK
SMIRK
WE'RE GOING TO GO WATCH A BATTLE!
WATCH A BATTLE?!

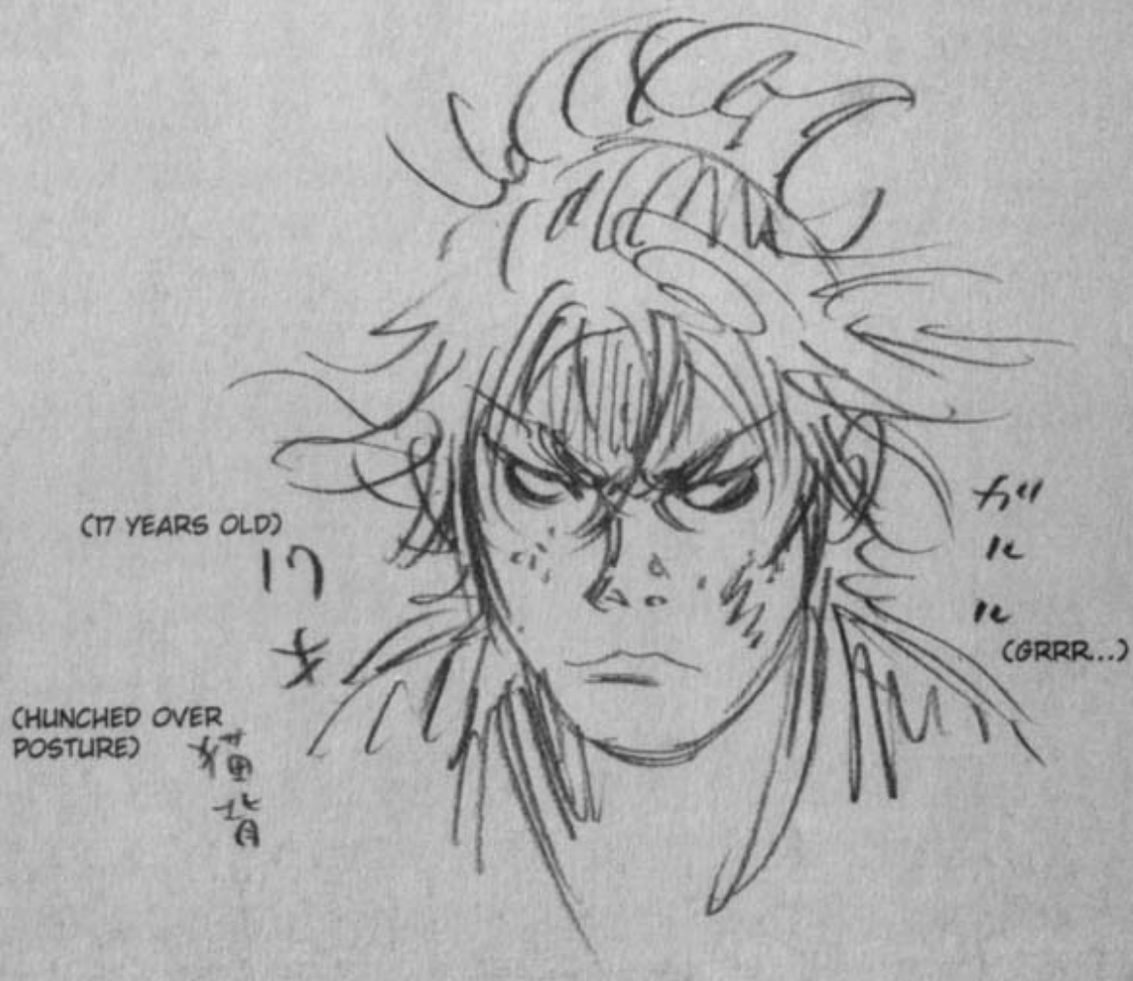
KRICH
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
KRICH
HUFF
RUMBLE
RUMBLE
!
HUFF
HUFF
THERE
THEY
ARE!!
FSSSHHH

FSSSHH
HOW DISAPPOINTING. IT'S OVER.
URR...
...
THEY'RE ALL...
...ALL DEAD...
SOME OF THEM ARE STILL BREATHING.
HUF...
HUF

KRICH
!
TUGG
HUF
HUF
TUNK
FSH
HUF
HUF
I CAME OUT HERE TO TAKE A GENERAL'S HEAD...

BUT I HAVEN'T CUT DOWN A SINGLE MAN YET.

Vagabond


(17 YEARS OLD)
17
(CRRR...)
(HUNCHED OVER POSTURE)

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

#161 | Those Who Defy Death

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

PLISH
.....
HAS HE GONE CRAZY...?
PLISH
HUF
HUF
PLISH
HE'S COMING TOWARDS US, SENSEI.
PLIP
HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUH
?
HUF
HUF
HUF
WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?

EAST OR WEST...
WHICH ARMY?
HUF
HUF
HUF

WE'RE JUST OBSERVERS.

I SEE...

HUF
HUF

SPLISH

SPLISH

HUF
HUF
PLISH
PLISH

WHAT ...
WHAT WAS THAT...?
HOW BIZARRE !
RIGHT, KOJIRŌ ?

BUT NOW I SEE...IF I'D GOTTEN RECRUITED FOR THE WAR...
...BUT I NEVER GOT A CHANCE TO JOIN THE WAR.
THAT WAS MY DREAM...
...I MIGHT HAVE ENDED UP LIKE THIS.

SOME LORD WOULD COMMEND ME FOR MY SPECTACULAR FIGHTING...
...AND HE WOULD HIRE ME AS AN INSTRUCTOR OF THE MARTIAL ARTS.

YARGH!
I WAS GOING TO JOIN AN WAR AND CUT DOWN THE ENEMY SWORDSMEN IN DROVES--
MUSŌ GONNOSUKE !!
I AM THE NUMBER ONE SWORDSMAN UNDER THE HEAVENS!!

MOTHER, FATHER...
I'M GLAD I WAS BORN A PEASANT.
...BY FIREARMS OR ARROWS.
EVERY-ONE'S BEEN KILLED...
SENSEI ...

BATTLES ...
...ARE NO LONGER FOUGHT WITH SWORDS, ARE THEY?
THAT'S RIGHT.
THE DAYS OF ADVANCING BY THE SKILL OF YOUR SWORD ARE OVER.
KOJIRŌ...
WHY ARE YOU SO DEDICATED TO THE SWORD?
巌流

FWAP
TRMMP
TRMMP
TRMMP
ANSWER ME!
YOU THREE!
WHICH ARMY ARE YOU WITH?

AHH!!!
WE ARE YOUR ENEMY!
SMIRK
...!!
BRRR

CUT THEM DOWN!!
WHAT ?!

CUT THEM DOWN !!
KILL THEM !!

KRAK
UNGH!
ARRGH!
ARR...

KRAK
FWOOSH
BRRRRR
YOU...
YOU BASTARD !!

THUNK
UHH!
KRAK
DAMN ...
YOU BASTARD!
CHAK
AHH!

UR--
UR--
HAKK
...

I'LL GET HIM.
HUF
HUF
HUF
TUNK
HUF
ONE THING KOJIRŌ TAUGHT ME.
EVEN IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIGHT...
HUF
...!!
KRIK
...YOU MUST NOT TIGHTEN UP.
KRIK
YAHH!!
FWOOSH

SHUK
WHUD
.....
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
AHHH!
HM?

HA HA HA!
TRMP TRMP
TRMP
THIS IS A BATTLE-FIELD...
...FULL OF DEATH-DEFYING MEN, EH, KOJIRŌ?!
HEY! OVER HERE!!

Vagabond

(HMF HEH HEH...)
ん
ふ
ふ
ふ
ふ
(HMF)
ん
ふ
ふ

TRMP
TRMP
TRMP
TROMP
TROMP
TROMP
HM?

#162 Rampage of the Beast

SENSEI
...?!
!!
TUGG
KIAK
!!
DAMN!
PUCH
.....

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
FSH
FICH

WHUD
.....
TUGG
TH-
THANKS
...
WHAT'S
YOUR
NAME...?!
FCH
SHINMEN
TAKEZŌ...

TR
M
P
TR
M
P

TR
M
P
HA
HAH!

IN THIS BLOODBATH !!
HE'S LAUGHING !!
WAK
ARGH!
KOJIRŌ!
UNGH...

HE'S LAUGHING, TOO!!
AHH...
ALL RIGHT THEN.
I'LL TRY LAUGHING TOO.
SMIRK SMIRK
AND SENSEI'S--
WELL, HE'S BEEN SMILING ALL ALONG.
DAMN IT...

HA HA HA HA HAH!
THIS IS MY FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE TOP!!
HMM ...
HE'S A WILD ONE.
THRAK
ARGH
YAHH!

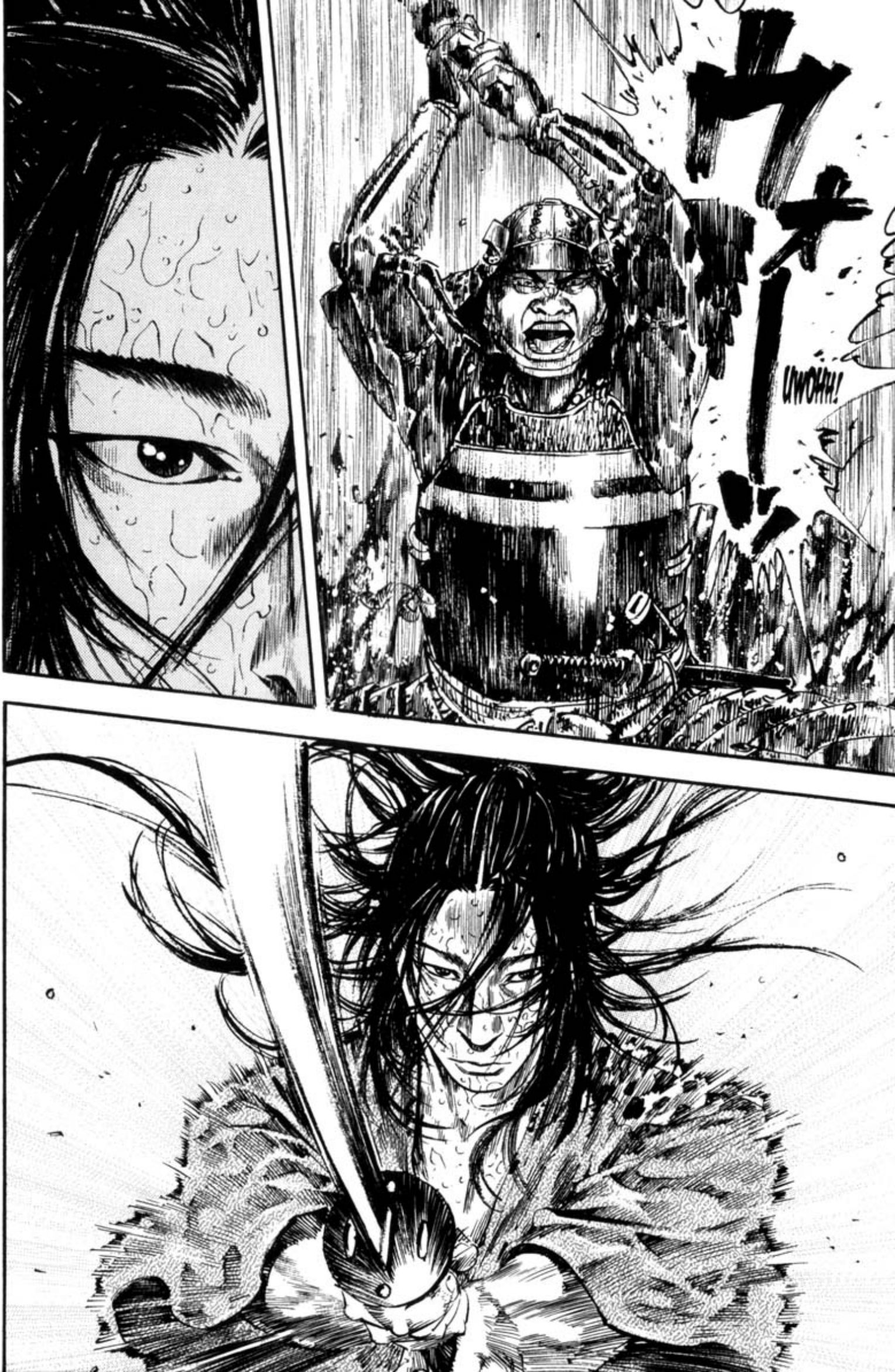
HA
HA
HA
HAH!
YAH!
HAK
PTU!
PLISH
UMF!
TRUNK
ARGH!

FICH
UNGH... YOU...
YOU BASTARD ...
SLISH

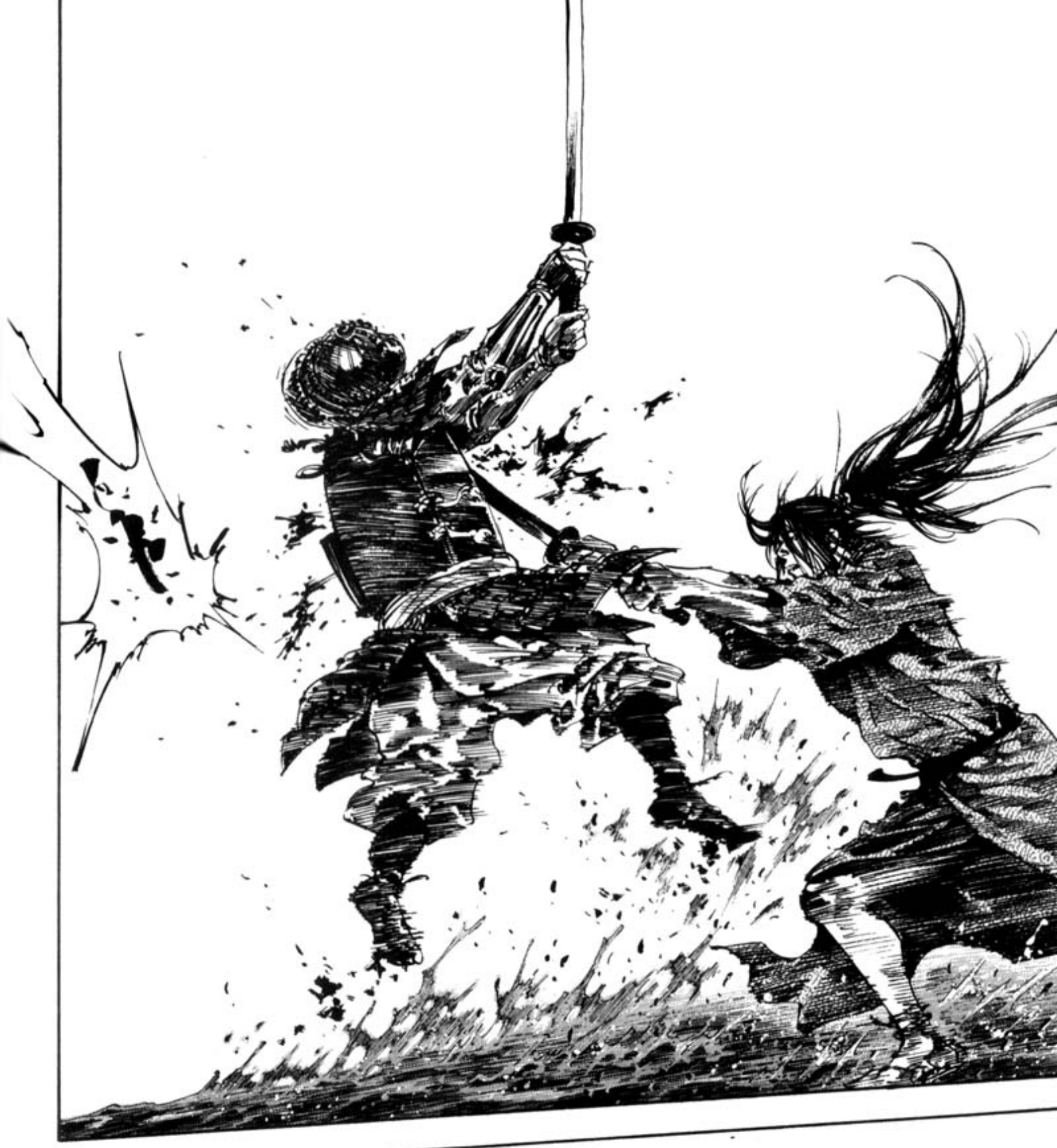
KRAK
PLISH
DAMN...
FSSSHH
DAMN IT! KILL HIM.

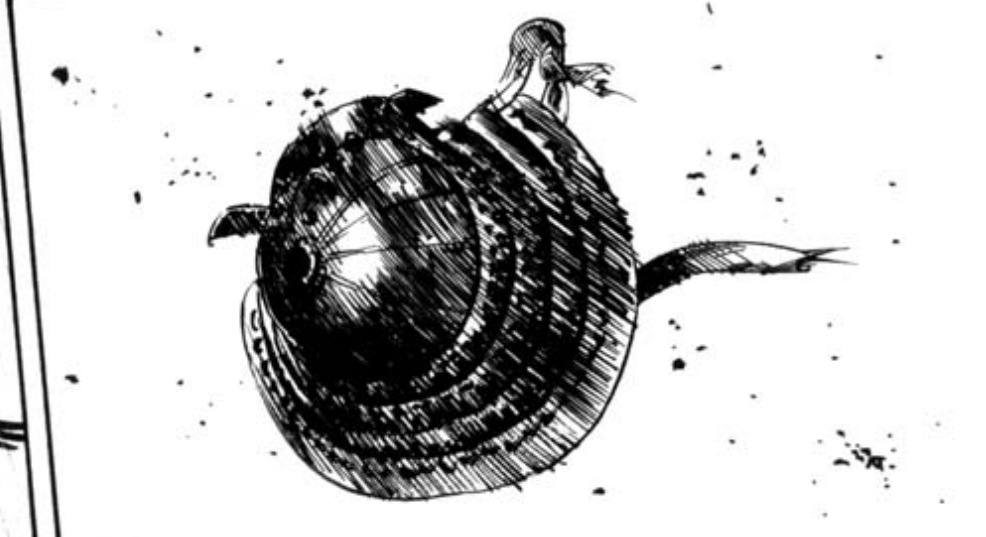
SO YOUNG...
YOUR SERENE EXPRES-SION...
IT DOESN'T BELONG HERE, IN THIS CARNAGE.
A YOUNG MAN LIKE YOU...
...SHOULDN'T BE HERE.

FICHH
BUT YOU *ARE* HERE...
...AND I HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO KILL YOU...
AHH...


UWOHH!

WHUD
THRAK
GYA...





WE GOT TWO BEASTS HERE.
FICH
TMP

FWOOSH

HMM...

SO THEIR PRIMAL INSTINCTS TELL THEM...

...THAT THEY'RE NOT ENEMIES.

Vagabond

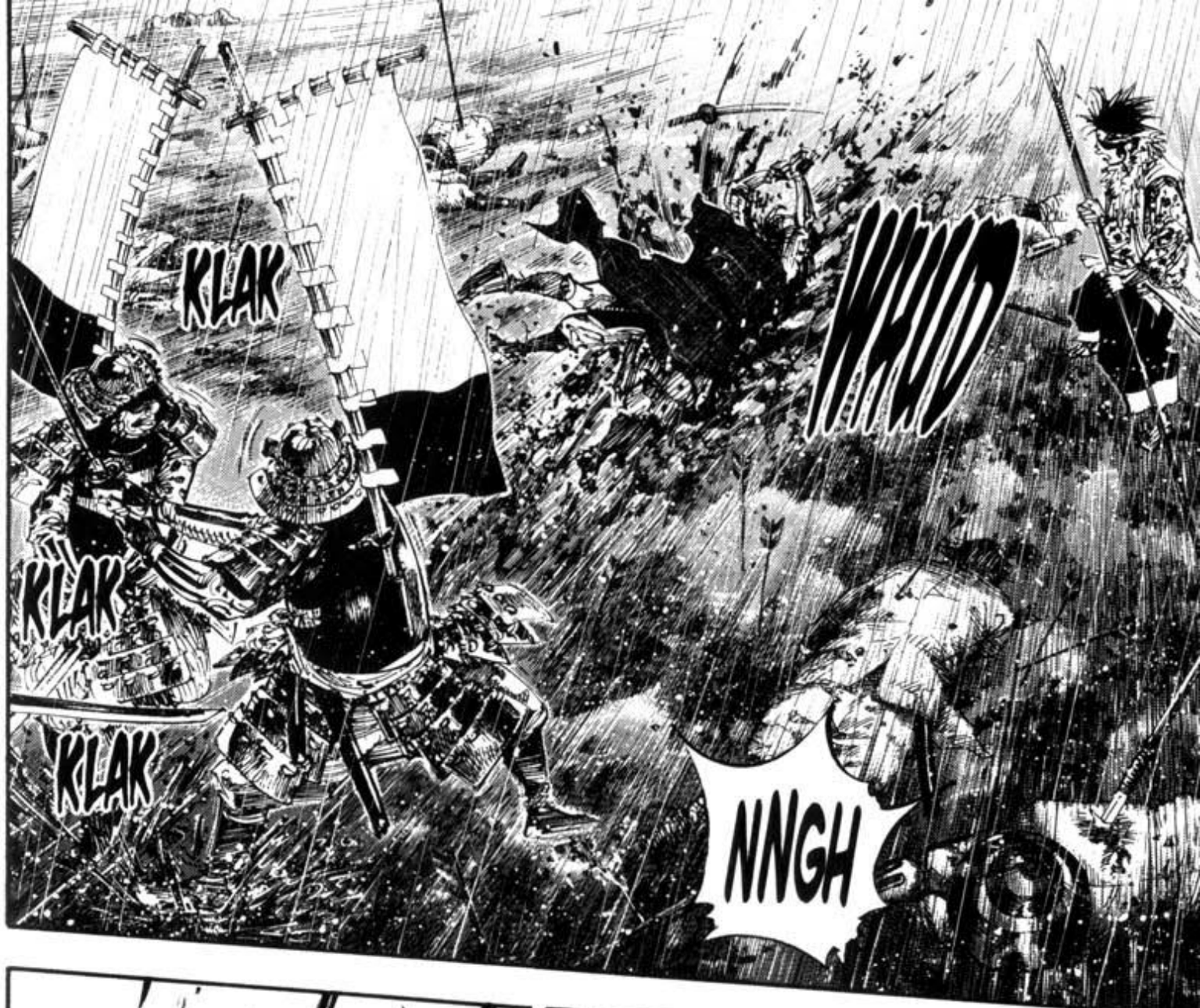
(SMILE)

#163 Six O'Clock at Sekigahara

WHEEEN
A COUPLE OF STRAGGLERS LIKE YOU...
IT'S NO USE FOR YOU TO RESIST.
WHO ARE YOU BASTARDS ?!
THE BATTLE IS OVER!
EEEN
WHY ARE YOU HAVING SUCH A HARD TIME WITH THESE BRATS?!

ARE YOU A GENERAL ?!
ATTACK NOW!!
ARRGH!
!

YOU BASTARD !!
THUD
URR?!


KLAK
KLAK
KLAK
NNGH

HAK
DAMN IT.

!
FIP

TUGG
!
HM!
USING HIM AS A SHIELD.
KLAK
DON'T BUNCH UP. SPREAD OUT!!
HUF
HUF
HUF
FSSSHH

THOSE EYES...!
HUF
HUF
HUF
HEY...

AHH...

...WHAT LITTLE CONFI-DENCE I HAVE IN MY SKILLS?!
HUF
HUF
HUF
DOES HE KNOW ...

HUF
HUF
DOES HE SEE RIGHT THROUGH ME?!

NOT ENOUGH TRAINING.
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
ALL THE ENTHUSIASM I HAD FOR THE SWORD IN MY YOUTH...
...HAS COMPLETELY SHRIVELED AND WANED.
HE SEES RIGHT THROUGH ME!!
HUF
RIGHT WHEN THIS BATTLE SHOULD BE ALL BUT OVER.
BUT HERE I AM.
HUF
I COMPLETELY TOOK IT FOR GRANTED...
I THOUGHT I'D NEVER HAVE TO RISK MY LIFE IN BATTLE.

NO!!
WE OUT-NUMBER HIM...
URR...
I'M SUCH A FOOL.
THAT'S RIGHT.
WE HAVE ARMOR.
WHEREAS HE'S UN-PROTECTED.

I'M NOT GOING TO DIE!!

ARRR!!!
!!

FWOOSH
SLASH

FWICH

THUNK
YAHHH!!
URR...
UH...

I'LL HAVE A BRAVE DEATH!!
ARRR!!

SHASH
AH...
ARGH!
KRCH

WHUD
GASP!

KILL THEM, CUT 'EM DOWN!!
COME ...
COME ON, MEN!!

!

HAH!
WHY DON'T YOU TRY CUTTING ME DOWN, GENERAL?!
HUH ?!
...
SNIF
SNIF
SNIF
?
WHUD
FRRRICH

SNIF
BWAH
.....
SNIF
SNIF
KOJIRŌ!!

THUNK
GOT HIM.
HMM...
A!

PLISH
PLISH
.....
PLISH
PLISH
HOLD ON TO THAT THING REAL TIGHT.
PLISH

PLOP

GAH!
HAHH!

WAH
HAH
HAH
.....
PLISH
PLISH
PLISH

THUNK

THWUP
I DON'T LIKE FIREARMS !!

HEEN
HEEN
URGH.
OFF THE HORSE.
I'VE GOT NOTHING AGAINST THE HORSE.
BRR
BRR
BRR
BRR
BRR
BRR
UR...
COME TO THINK OF IT...
...I GOT NOTHING AGAINST YOU EITHER.
HM?
GET OUT OF HERE!

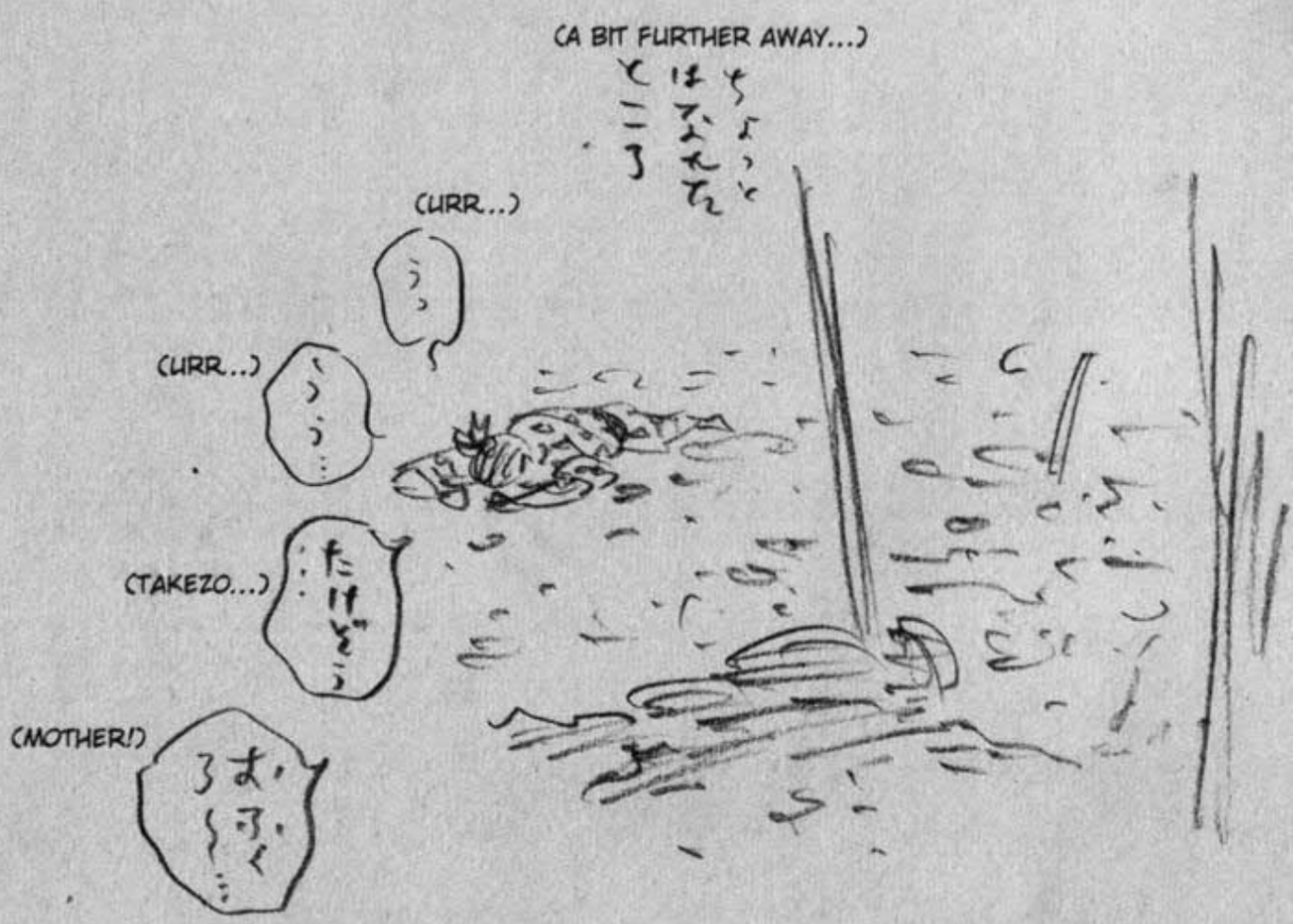
FSSSHH

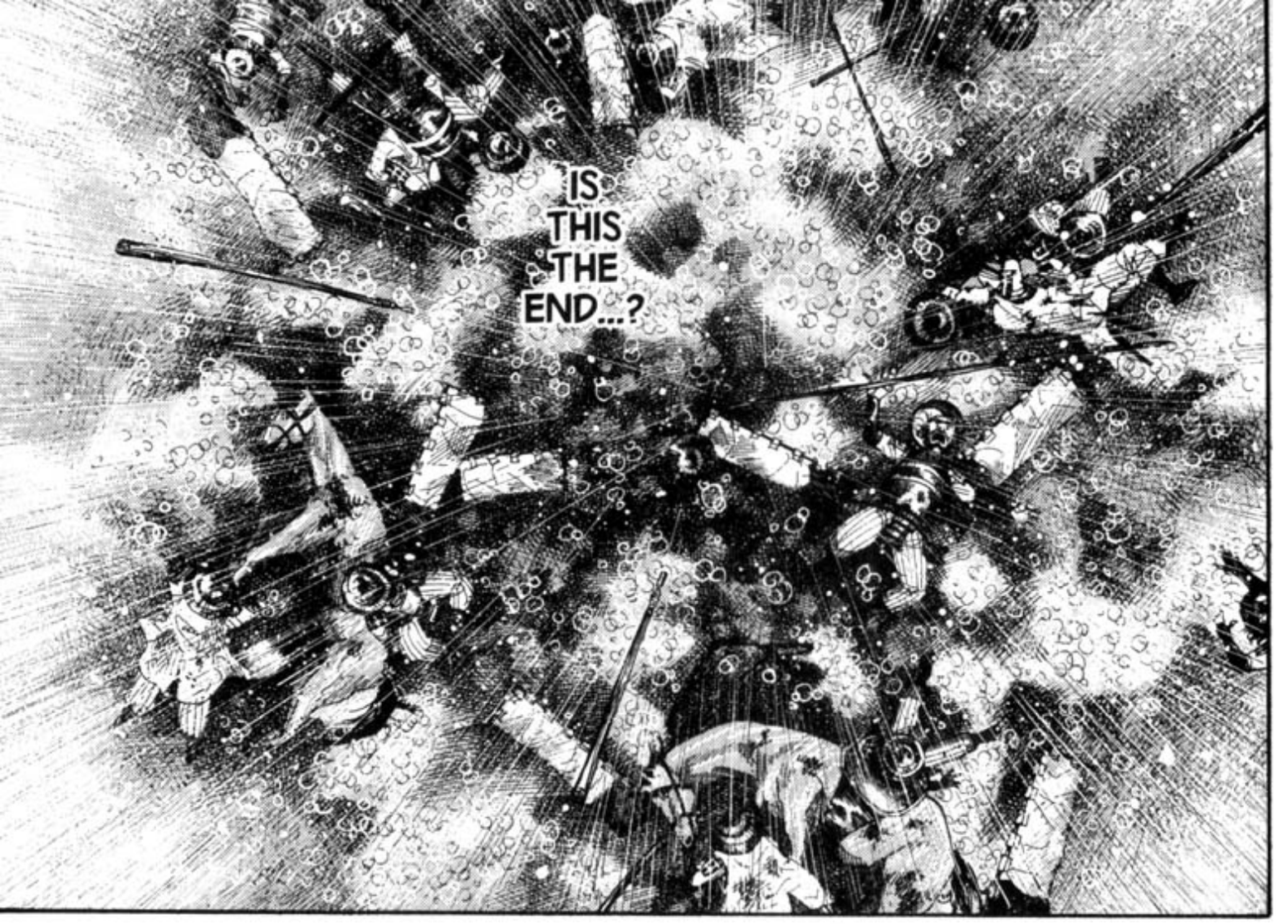
THAT WILD BEAST...
WHERE'D HE GO...?

FWICH
.....

THAT WAS AN AMAZING RAMPAGE...

Vagabond


(A BIT FURTHER AWAY...)
(URR...)
(URR...)
(TAKEZO...)
(MOTHER!)


IS THIS THE END...?

...HOPING FOR SOMETHING DIFFERENT...
I LEFT MY VILLAGE...

DAMN IT!!
THERE WAS NO LIGHT.

I CAME HERE LIKE A MOTH DRAWN TO LIGHT.

#164 | Refugee Hunters

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF
FWP
FWP
!!
FICH

HUF
HUF
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?!

KTNK

TUNK
TUNK
TUNK
!!
TUNK
TUNK
TUNK
GAHAA

HEH HEH... YOU CAN'T HOLD THIS AGAINST US.
OUR HOUSES WERE BURNED DOWN, OUR FARMS DESTROYED.
OUR WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE TAKEN AWAY.

IT'S IN GOOD CONDITION.
WE'LL GET A GOOD PRICE FOR THIS ONE.

THIS GUY DIDN'T FIGHT MUCH.

IT'S SPOTLESS.

...WE LIVE NEAR THE BATTLE-FIELD.
AND ONLY BECAUSE...

KCHING
HEY, HERE'S A PURSE.
WE'RE NOT EVEN CLOSE TO GETTING BACK WHAT WE LOST, RIGHT EVERYONE?
KLAK
DAMN RIGHT!!

FICH
FICH

THEY STRIPPED HIM DOWN...
GASP!!
NOT ONLY DO YOU GET HUNTED DOWN BY THE ENEMY...
...BUT ALSO BY THE LOCAL PEASANTS WHO SUFFERED FROM THE WAR.
YOU CAN'T RETURN HOME ALIVE ONCE YOU'VE BEEN DEFEATED.
THAT'S WHAT MY FATHER SAID.
HEY, WAIT.
SENSEI, MAYBE...
WAR IS HELL IF YOU LOSE, HUH, KOJIRŌ?
HM?

...LOOK LIKE DEFEATED SOLDIERS ...?
MAYBE WE MIGHT ALSO...

?

LET'S TRY TO MAKE IT HOME ALIVE, KID!
SENSEI ?!

SENSEI ...!!

WOULDN'T WANT TO DIE WITHOUT EVER HAVING PUT WHAT YOU GOT BETWEEN YOUR LEGS TO GOOD USE, NOW WOULD YOU?!

HEY, DID YOU HEAR...?
DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE REWARD FOR CAPTURING ISHIDA MITSUNARI, THE LEADER OF THE WESTERN ARMY IS?
THE PERSON'S HOME VILLAGE IS EXEMPT FROM THE ANNUAL TAX!
NO, WHAT IS IT?

WHAT...
...WAS THAT?!
FICH
FICH
FICH
THE SUN IS SETTING...

.....
NIGHTFALL...

FICH
FICH
FICH
FICH
FICH
FICH

HUF
HUF
HUF
HUF

PLEASE WAIT.
KOJIRO'S BACK THERE...

SENSEI!

KOJIRŌ'S BACK THERE...
SENSEI!
TMP TMP
HEY!

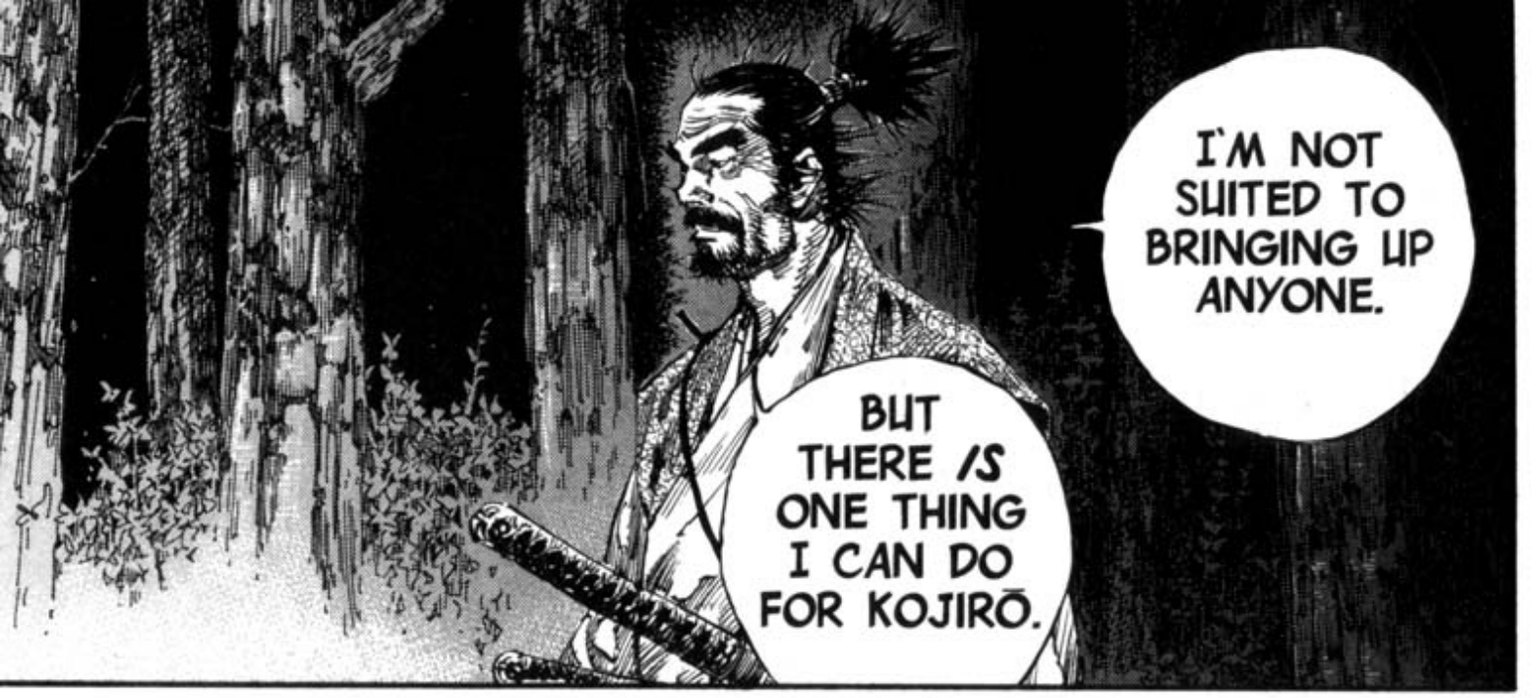
KANEMAKI SENSEI...
I CAN'T TELL ANYMORE...

KOJIRŌ
...

PLEASE LOOK AFTER KOJIRŌ!!

I MAY KNOW ABOUT MYSELF, BUT I KNOW NOTHING ABOUT OTHERS.

YOU SAID YOU HAD NO IDEA WHAT KOJIRŌ'S POTENTIAL WAS ANYMORE.
I DONT HAVE ANY IDEA EITHER.

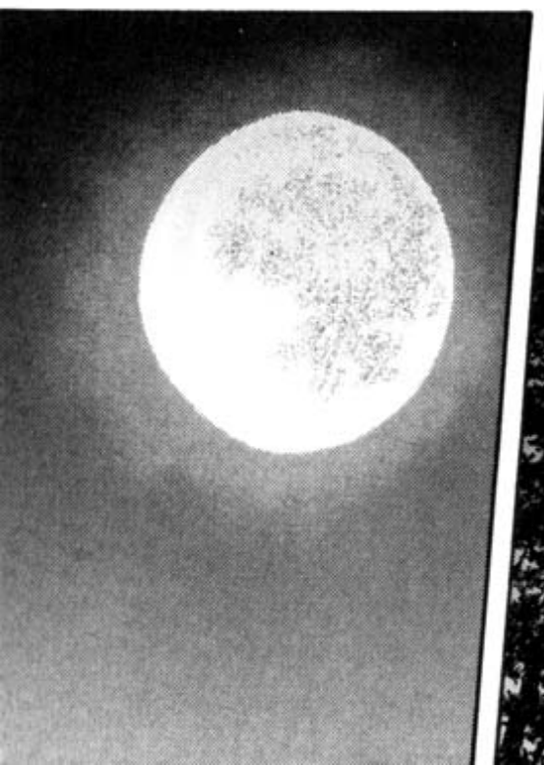

I'M NOT SUITED TO BRINGING UP ANYONE.
BUT THERE IS ONE THING I CAN DO FOR KOJIRŌ.

I CAN HAVE HIM GO THROUGH WHAT I DID.

ALL I CAN SAY IS...

...BECOME
ME.

GRP



AHH...

!

HEY...
THE TORCHES ARE GATHERING TOGETHER.
.....

IT'S A PRETTY SIGHT.
INDEED.

HMM...
HOW CAN YOU BE SO CAREFREE?
IT CAN ONLY MEAN ONE THING-- THEY CAPTURED ONE OF OUR COMRADES!
URR...
TOSHIMUNE, STOP...
DAMN!
URR...
NNGH.
URRGH!
YOU NEED A PAIR OF PINCERS.
THE FLESH HAS TIGHTENED AROUND IT. YOU MUSTN'T REMOVE IT.

SHINJIRŌ
...

HUF
HUF
HUF
I'M ALL RIGHT... SORRY...

TOK
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, ICHIZŌ? WE'LL GET CAUGHT.
SHUT YOUR BROTHER UP!

THAT LIGHT...
I HOPE IT'S NOT OUR LORD.

HUF
HUF

YOU FOOL. THERE'S NO CHANCE OUR LORD WOULD BE THERE!
THAT'S RIGHT. HE SHOULD BE FAR AWAY FROM HERE!!
THAT'S RIGHT.
WE PROMISED HIM...
HUF
I SEE...
HUF
THAT'S TRUE...
IN OSAKA ...
HUF
HUF
...WE WOULD SURVIVE AND REGROUP WITH HIM IN OSAKA.

THUNK

WE NEED TO RID OURSELVES OF ANYTHING WE DON'T NEED TO SURVIVE.
THESE ARE USELESS.

YES...
THUNK

HUF
HUF

THUNK
THUNK

WHAT ?

YOU'RE RIGHT.

.....
NNGH ...
URRGH... BUT LOOK AT HOW MANY WE MANAGED TO...
LET'S GET RID OF THESE, KOLIN.
THUNK
THUNK
THUNK
.....
COME NOW, KOLIN ...

SO OUR NEXT BATTLE'S BEGUN.

WE WILL SURVIVE...

WE'LL SURVIVE BY CUTTING DOWN EVERYONE WHO COMES OUR WAY.
KRACK

About the Author

VAGABOND was created by Takehiko Inoue, author of the best-selling manga *SLAM DUNK*, with over 100 million copies in print worldwide. Inoue received the 2000 Media Arts award for Manga from the Japanese Ministry of Culture as well as the 2000 Kodansha Award for best manga for his work on *VAGABOND*. In 2002, *VAGABOND* received the prestigious Tezuka award for best manga. Most recently, Inoue has been nominated for a 2003 Eisner Award for best writer/artist. To date *VAGABOND* has sold over 22 million copies throughout the world. In addition to his numerous manga titles, Inoue also created the character designs for the PlayStation basketball game, *ONE ON ONE*.

About *VAGABOND* and Miyamoto Musashi

Takehiko Inoue's *VAGABOND*, based on Eiji Yoshikawa's novel *MUSASHI*, is a fictional account of the life of Miyamoto Musashi (1584-1645). The historical figure Miyamoto Musashi, author of the philosophical strategy guide *A BOOK OF FIVE RINGS*, was a master of the sword and was revered as a "sword-saint." He founded the Niten Ichi style of sword fighting, which is typified by fighting with both long and short swords at once—holding the long sword with the right hand and the short sword with the left. Musashi was also a master of the "gentler arts"—he was a master of *sumi-e* (black ink drawings), metalworking, and woodcarving. The films that comprise *THE SAMURAI TRILOGY* directed by Hiroshi Inagaki and starring Toshiro Mifune, were also based on Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*. Inspired by the huge success of *VAGABOND* in Japan, in 2003 NHK produced the historical period drama *MUSASHI*. Also based on Yoshikawa's novel, this drama stars kabuki actor Shinnosuke Ichikawa as Musashi and TV star Ryoko Yonekura as Otsu.

A note on names:

The names presented within the context of this comic are presented in the traditional Japanese order—surname followed by first name. "Miyamoto" is Miyamoto Musashi's last name and "Musashi" is his first name. The name of the creator of *VAGABOND*, however, has been presented first name first, last name second. "Takehiko" is the author's first name and "Inoue" is his last name.

Glossary and Extraneous Background Information

Echizen
Located in the northern part of present day Fukui Prefecture.

Ito Ittosai (Dates unknown)
Founder of the Itto-ryu school of sword fighting. Before establishing his own style, Ittosai is said to have studied a variant of the Chujo-ryu style of sword fighting under Kanemaki Jisai's instruction.

Muso Gonnosuke (dates unknown)
Founder of the Shinto Muso-ryu school of martial arts which mainly utilized the wooden staff. Gonnosuke is said to have been one of the many to lose to Musashi in a duel. According to some accounts he defeated Musashi in a rematch.

Sasaki Kojiro (dates unknown)
The legendary archrival of Miyamoto Musashi. Kojiro is believed to have studied the Chujo-ryu style of swordsmanship under the instruction of either Toda Seigen or Kanemaki Jisai. Kojiro was renowned for his *Tsubame-gaeshi*, or "swallow-cut" technique which was inspired by the movement of a swallow in flight.

The Sengoku Period and the Battle of Sekigahara
The Warring States or *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) in Japan was a time of chaos and conflict. Central authorities, in the form of the imperial court and the shogunate, had grown increasingly weaker and the land was effectively ruled autonomously by numerous *daimyo* (domainal lords). Looking to expand their spheres of control, the *daimyo* were constantly at war with each other. One *daimyo* in particular, Oda Nobunaga, set out on a mission to unify Japan by means of conquest. Incredibly successful, by the time of his assassination in 1582, he managed to control approximately one-third of all of Japan. One of Nobunaga's chief generals, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, became Nobunaga's successor to carry on the quest for unification. Through a process of conquest and conciliation, Hideyoshi succeeded in creating an orderly federation amongst the *daimyo,* and by 1590, order was restored to Japan under Hideyoshi's rule. Hideyoshi's death in 1598, however, presented the question of succession. Most of the *daimyo* from the domains in the west remained loyal to the Toyotomi Clan and its five-year-old heir, Toyotomi Hideyori. Tokugawa Ieyasu, however, leading the major *daimyo* from central and eastern Japan, challenged the Toyotomi clan's leadership. The two sides clashed at the Battle of Sekigahara (1600) in Mino (located in present-day Gifu Prefecture) where the Tokugawa claimed an overwhelming victory. From that point on, the Tokugawa clan would effectively rule Japan for the next 250 years.

Shinmen Takezo
Miyamoto Musashi's boyhood name.

Takuan Soho (1573-1645)
A monk of the Rinzai sect of Zen Buddhism, by the time Takuan was 37, he was appointed abbot of the leading temple of the Rinzai sect, Daitokuji. Takuan was an important figure whose acute and brutally honest advice was sought by influential and powerful figures such as Emperor Go Mizuno and the shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu. His correspondence to Yagyu Munenori discussing Zen and swordsmanship entitled *THE UNFETTERED MIND* has become an influential treatise in both the areas of philosophy and martial arts. The pickled daikon radish, *takuan*, also bears his name.

The Yagyu Clan
Yagyu Muneyoshi Sekishusai (1527-1606) was the founder of the famed Yagyu-Shinkage school of sword fighting. His son Yagyu Munenori (1571-1646) was one of Tokugawa's key generals at the Battle of Sekigahara. Munenori was appointed as the official fencing instructor of the Tokugawa Clan, and in 1632 the Yagyu were appointed as the *ometsuke*—responsible for the surveillance of the *daimyo*. Although the Yagyu clan has been depicted in Kazuo Koike's *LONE WOLF AND CUB* as the plotters of the downfall of Itto Ogami, the general Japanese popular culture take on the Yagyu Clan is more positive. More specifically, Munenori's son, Yagyu Jubei (1607-1650), is viewed as a wandering hero protecting the people from evildoers.

Yoshioka Kempo (dates unknown)
A distinguished warrior during the *Sengoku* period (1482-1558) and the founder of the renowned Yoshioka school of sword fighting. Yoshioka Kempo mastered the Kyohachi style of swordmanship and then modified it to form the Yoshioka style. In the context of Inoue's *VAGABOND,* as well as in Yoshikawa's *MUSASHI*, Yoshioka Seijuro and Denshichiro are Kempo's sons who are historically thought to have dueled with Miyamoto Musashi on numerous occasions.

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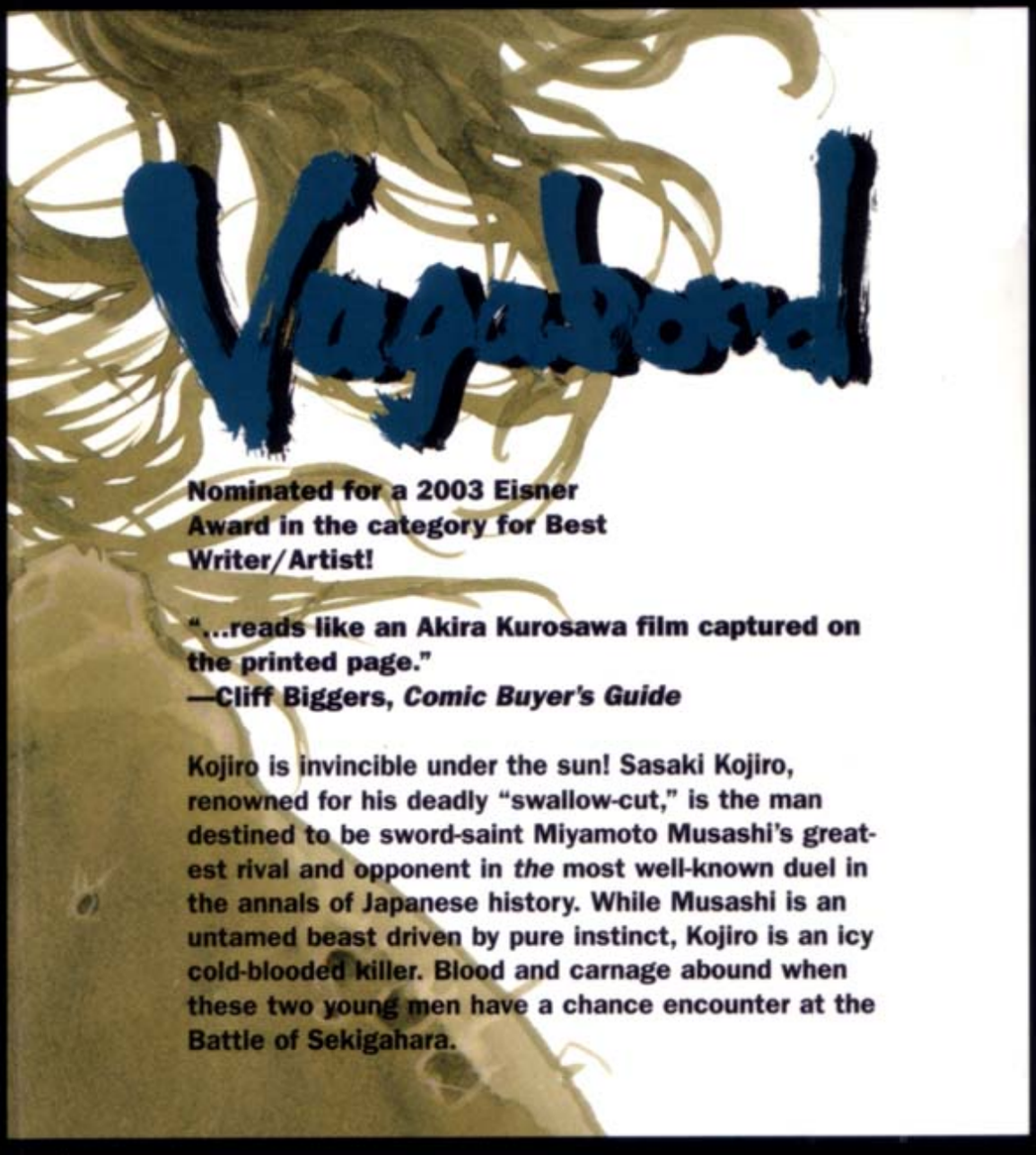

Nominated for a 2003 Eisner Award in the category for Best Writer/Artist!

"...reads like an Akira Kurosawa film captured on the printed page."
—Cliff Biggers, *Comic Buyer's Guide*

Kojiro is invincible under the sun! Sasaki Kojiro, renowned for his deadly "swallow-cut," is the man destined to be sword-saint Miyamoto Musashi's greatest rival and opponent in *the* most well-known duel in the annals of Japanese history. While Musashi is an untamed beast driven by pure instinct, Kojiro is an icy cold-blooded killer. Blood and carnage abound when these two young men have a chance encounter at the Battle of Sekigahara.

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